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Maintenance of international security: stability and development of South-Eastern Europe

Effects of atomic radiation

Environment and sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 15 September 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith a document entitled "Facts on consequences of the use of depleted uranium in the NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", prepared by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 67 (b), 82, 95 (a) and 155, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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A/55/398
S/2000/883

Annex to the letter dated 15 September 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

FACTS ON CONSEQUENCES OF THE USE OF DEPLETED URANIUM IN THE NATO AGGRESSION AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA IN 1999

I

In the NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, called "Humanitarian intervention - Guardian Angel", commander of French air force in NATO, General Joffret stated:[1]

"The air force received orders to destroy life in Serbia".

1. NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, from 24 March to 10 June 1999, was committed in gross violation of the fundamental principles of international relations and international law in general. All available military NATO capacities were engaged, circumventing the role and violating the mandate of the UN Security Council and the founding act of NATO. It caused extensive loss of life, humanitarian, economic and environmental catastrophe whose tragic consequences cannot be limited in terms of time or territory. In its intensity, engaged military force and consequences, this is **the largest and most drastic aggression** in the period after the Second World War. Over the territory of the FRY, 25,200 sorties were flown and 25,000 tons of explosives were dropped.

Women, children, the elderly, bus and train passengers, passers-by on the bridges were killed. 2,500 persons lost their lives, out of whom 30 per cent were children. More than 10,000 persons were wounded, out of whom more than 40 per cent children.

Residential quarters, bridges, roads, railways, oil refineries, chemical facilities, vital business structures, TV and radio transmitters were destroyed or heavily damaged. Many health and education institutions, cultural monuments, churches, monasteries, cemeteries were also razed to the ground. According to the initial estimates, overall material damage exceeds US$ 100 billion.

2. In view of the above, the NATO aggression on the FR of Yugoslavia represents a crime against peace and humanity and a crime of genocide. The Government of the FR of Yugoslavia submitted an Application to the International Court of Justice in The Hague against ten NATO Member States which committed the aggression by bombing the territory of the FR of Yugoslavia, including systematic, deliberate attacks on civilians and non-military targets. By causing extensive environmental damage and using depleted uranium munitions, cluster and carbon-fibre bombs, the relevant provision of the Genocide Convention, banning the imposition of such conditions of life aimed at **physically destroying in whole or in part a national group**, was violated.[2]

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1 The statement of the commander of French air force in NATO for France Info and France International was quoted in his letter by Michel Fontanie, President of ASFED FRANCE (Association pour la sauvegarde des familles et enfants de disparus), Strasbourg, 27 May 1999, Annex 1

2 Article 2c of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948

3. After the end of the NATO aggression, under UN SC resolution 1244 (1999), the international security presence (KFOR) was mandated to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia and the FR of Yugoslavia, to ensure physical and property safety of the population, to ensure public peace, order and the rule of law, security and basic protection of ethnic and religious communities in the Serb Province of Kosovo and Metohija (hereinafter: the Province). However, the result of their one-year long presence in the Province is the prevailing chaos and insecurity, crime and ethnic cleansing of the non-Albanian population. Since the arrival of KFOR and UNMIK, 1,500 citizens were killed and more than 2,000 abducted, mostly Serbs and Montenegrins, then Muslims, Roma, Goranci, Turks, Egyptians. More than 50,000 Serb houses were burned, more than 360,000 Serbs and Montenegrins, and members of other non-Albanian ethnic groups were expelled, and around 100 churches, monasteries and medieval cultural monuments were destroyed and burned and Orthodox cemeteries desecrated. Private and state property is forcibly seized, and the Province has been turned into a centre of organised international crime, arms and drug smuggling and white slavery, etc. These terrorist and other criminal acts, committed by Albanian terrorist groups, have often been carried out with the assistance of KFOR and UNMIK and that is the reason why the perpetrators of the most serious crimes against Serbs and other non-Albanian ethnic groups have not been brought to justice.

4. Radio France International (RFI), in its commentary of 11 August 2000, says that humanitarian organisations active in the "humanitarian war", only now after one-year presence in the Province, express their concern for the fate of non-Albanian population. So, "Medicines sans frontieres" announced that they would withdraw from the Province because of ethnic cleansing and violence against the non-Albanian population. The "Helsinki Federation for Human Rights" claims that the authorities in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija are responsible for violence against the non-Albanian population and that life is full of dangers and difficult particularly for the Serbs in the enclaves. In addition, several months ago the US organization "Human Rights Watch" criticised the bombing of civilian targets by NATO in the war that only a year before it also considered "humanitarian" and unreservedly supported. RFI further states that since the end of the war around 250 humanitarian organisations have been active in the Province. The violence against civilians and ethnic cleansing of the non-Albanian population reached their peak in the first months after the end of the war, often in the presence of soldiers or observers. No humanitarian organization reported it or was it covered by the media. On the other hand, during the war, when no one actually could have any reliable information on what was going on in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija, humanitarian organisations, almost on a daily basis, made statements on extreme violence, which were totally unconfirmed and proven untrue, which the media, also unreservedly, carried on the front pages, with dramatic headlines. This ethnic cleansing in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija after the war, is **the most discreet and most efficient ethnic cleansing in the past years in the world**, right in the heart of Europe, in the very presence of numerous media and humanitarian organisations, concludes RFI.[3]

[3] S. Cerovic, Radio France International, 11 August 2000

I I

By deliberately destroying oil refineries, chemical installations as well as by using prohibited weapons with **depleted uranium** ammunition (DU), it intentionally caused environmental disaster with unforeseeable consequences for the population of the FR of Yugoslavia and the countries in the region. The use of DU weapons in Yugoslavia **"adds a new dimension to the crime NATO** is perpetrating against the Yugoslav people including those in Kosovo". [4]

5. During the armed NATO aggression against the FR of Yugoslavia, it was established beyond doubt that US A-10 aircraft fired shells with depleted uranium (DU). According to the information of the Army of Yugoslavia, some 50,000 missiles with DU were fired on some 100 densely populated locations in the Serb province of Kosovo and Metohija. It was also established that 3,000-5,000 DU shells were fired on 8 locations outside the Province – of which six in the region of Preševo and Bujanovac (and one in a broader area of Vranje and one in Montenegro). The Yugoslav authorities undertook a detailed investigation of all locations outside the Province and established that contamination is going up to 235,000 Bq/kg, which is **1,100 times above** than the permissible level of contamination. The contaminated areas were marked and other activities are underway to deal with the consequences.[5]

US Department of Defense refused to release information about the locations and quantities of DU used in the territory of the FR of Yugoslavia. In his letter to P. Sullivan, Executive Director of NGWRC of 19 July 1999, the Director of the Joint Staff denied access to this information because "The issues related to the use of DU in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia area of operations are **under litigation in the International Court of Justice**. Any answers we provide at this time may impact the interests of the United States in these proceedings".[6]

At the request of UN Secretary-General K. Annan, NATO Secretary-General G. Robertson, in his letter of 7 February 2000, confirmed that throughout the territory of the Province of Kosovo and Metohija, in approximately 100 air strikes, around 31,000 rounds of DU ammunition were used (which is equivalent to 10 tons of DU) and attached a map with only 28 locations, saying that "at this moment it is impossible to state accurately every location where DU ammunition was used".[7] (It was not said why it was impossible at this moment, nor when it will be possible, if in July 1999 it was not possible). Following the publication of this information, the Pentagon spokesman stated that DU shells are "not environmentally harmful, nor do they present a significant impact on health"[8].

6. Nevertheless, the USA knows best the characteristics of DU weapons and deliberately use it to cause long-standing suffering and consequences to the future generations. On the basis of many research studies conducted after the Gulf war by US institutes, particularly by the Army Environmental Policy

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[4] John Catalinotto, DU Education Project of the International Action Center, New York

[5] Report of the FRY, The consequences of NATO bombing on environment, item 5.1

[6] National Gulf War Resource Center-NGWRC, Military Toxics Project, D. Fahey, "A Fear of Falling", page 20, 4 August 1999, Washington.

[7] A letter of NATO Secretary General G. Robertson to UN Secretary-General K.Annan, 7 February 2000, Annex 2

[8] Reuters, 23 March 2000

Institute,[9] it was established beyond doubt, that DU contaminates both environment and affects population on a lasting basis - development of tumors, immune system damage, neurological problems, respiratory disease, kidney damage and male and female reproductive effects, newly-borns with deformities, etc.

DU is radioactive and chemically toxic waste product of the nuclear industry. According to US Army researches, the intoxication of inhaled DU depends largely upon the size and solubility of the oxide. The quantity, size and solubility of oxide created by an impact may vary considerably, but the aerosol is generally understood to contain a high percentage, 50 to 96 per cent, of respirable-size particles.[10] Respirable size insoluble particles may deposit in various lung compartments and remain there for years irradiating the tissue, and cause increased incidence of respiratory disorders, and soluble particles are transported from the lungs into the blood and further transported to distal organs.[11] DU is oxidized in body fluids and transported in the bloodstream and deposits in the bones, kidneys, lymph nodes, muscles, testicles and brain, thus causing kidney damage, cancers of the lung and bone, respiratory disease, skin disorders, neurocognitive disorders, chromosomal damage, and birth defects.[12]

The degree of danger is illustrated by the fact that in February 1980 a court order from the State of New York **"for reason of public health"** forced National Lead Industries, a manufacturer of DU tips, to stop production since they had exceeded the prescribed monthly limits of discharging radioactive material into the air corresponding to 387g. of DU (the trip of only one shell in the aircraft gun contains 298 g. of DU). Scientist Leonard Dietz, in his letter to the Atomic Scientists Bulletin, asked this question: "If the authorities of the State of New York were worried about discharges that were **the monthly** equivalent of the particles in only one or two uranium projectiles, why wasn't the US government worried about the effect of tens of thousands of projectiles fired in the several days of the war".[13]

7. The effect of DU is lasting (DU has a half-life of 4.5 billion years) and its chemical and **radiological toxicity cannot be reduced**. If inhaled or ingested though water and food it cannot be removed from the body, acting as a quiet killer. In addition to **cancer and leukemia**, which occur within 5-30 years, DU causes genetic mutation, **malformations and infertility**. The fact that most of DU, in addition to the Province of Kosovo and Metohija was dropped in the area of Preševo and Bujanovac, with a large Albanian population, indicates that the goal might be, in addition to destroying the Serbs, also an attempt to systematically destroy the coming generations of the Albanian population, whose birth rate is among the highest in the world: according to the data from 1994, growth rate in Serbia is minus 3 ‰, in Vojvodina, minus 0.3 ‰, in central Serbia, and even plus 17.2 ‰ in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija (half the figure in Albania).

8. The US has tried to justify the use of weapons with DU ammunition owing allegedly to their greater effectiveness in anti-tank warfare. The fact that 30,000-50,000 DU missiles were dropped in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija, and only a dozen Yugoslav Army tanks were destroyed, raises the issue of the true goals in using such quantities of DU ammunition in densely populated areas. The most important reason is that DU is made from radioactive waste, which is very expensive to store and safeguard. The US thus disposes of large quantities of hazardous waste by spilling it over the territories of other countries. Uncontrolled disposal of this **radioactive waste deliberately causes lasting and dangerous contamination of Europe**.

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9 Health and Environmental Consequences of DU in the US Army - Technical Report, US Army Environmental Policy Institute - AEPI

10 US Army Armament Research Development and Engineering Center, 8 March 1991

11 US Department of Health/Human service - ATSDR, 1999

12 US Army Chemical School, Development of DU Training Support Packages, page B-5, October 1995; US Armed Forces Radiobiologoy Research Institute-AFRRI, Health Effects of DU, Project Briefing, July 1999

13 John Miller, "Depleted uranium: radioactive residue in the desert", printed in "Downtown", October 1991

The dispersion of DU particles cannot be controlled or prevented and may spill over to neighboring states and regions. When DU missile burns, or explodes, DU aerosol, a **fine, breathable, radioactive dust is released that can travel at least 40 km**, while some scientists consider that depending on weather conditions, "the fallout range of DU aerosol dust is virtually unlimited".[14] According to research in Kuwait, DU aerosol remained in the air for at least two years, and travelled to noncombatant countries, like Saudi Arabia.[15] During NATO bombing of Yugoslavia "scientists in Greece detected radiation levels of 25 per cent above normal, whenever the wind blew from the direction of Kosovo. Bulgarian scientists reported levels eight times higher than usual within Bulgaria itself".[16]

On the basis of chemical activity of uranium water-soluble oxides that can be transported through surface and underground waters, the scientists from US Los Alamos National Laboratory indicate the movement of DU through soil, water courses and the root systems of plants,[17] causing contamination of plant roots and fruits, animal milk and meat. In view of the fact that soluble DU aerosol oxide dust may contaminate in time underground water and sources of drinking water (underground water contamination in Minnesota and New Mexico, US, was confirmed)[18], as well as the fact that the water basin from the Province of Kosovo and Metohija empties into the Adriatic and the Black Sea, the effects of the contamination may be expected in the neighboring countries as well.

III

Large amount of particles of DU oxide aerosol of respirable size, as dust cloud, with devastating effects, are transported by wind turning large territories into a **radioactive desert**. DU dust from the soil can be stirred up and resuspended by the wind or the movement of people and vehicles.

Some 10-15 tons of DU have been scattered throughout the Province of Kosovo and Metohija. In addition to the local population, international civilian and security presences, staff of humanitarian and non-governmental organizations in general deployed in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija, are also exposed to DU **dust**, inhaled or ingested through food and water. Among them, as well as among US veterans from the Gulf war, **"inexplicable illness"** began showing up. The fact is that the US contaminated the territory, and that members from other countries are deployed in the most affected areas.

9. Armies and Governments of NATO countries are aware of the dangers arising from DU. Some Governments deliberately expose their soldiers and police officers in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija to DU, while others undertake certain measures:

- The Dutch Government gives to its troops protective clothing, afterwards stored in depots for dangerously contaminated materials, while on **30 June 2000, the Netherlands withdrew its soldiers** from the Province of Kosovo and Metohija.

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14 Leonard Dietz, nuclear physicist from Knolls Atomic Laboratory, "Contamination of Persian Gulf War Veterans and Others by DU", 20 June 1996

15 Catherine Euler, Ph.D. International Peace Bureau / Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, Written Report- DU Weapons, UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 51st session, August 1999

16 Catherine Euler, Ph.D. CADU- Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, Oral Statement, DU Munitions: The use of Radiological Weapons as a Violation of Human Rights, UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 51st session, August 1999, Annex 3

17 Ibid. Annex 3

18 John Miller, "Depleted Uranium: radioactive residue in the desert", printed in "Downtown", October 1991

- Italian and German soldiers use **imported food and water** (however, no one can escape the effects of breathing in the air).

- **UN humanitarian organizations do not send pregnant women** to the Province of Kosovo and Metohija, while other aid workers have been offered the option of refusing duty stations in Yugoslavia, but if they do accept such a posting, a note will be put in their personnel files, in order to facilitate, if necessary, the workers' later claims for compensation, in the event of negative effects upon their health.[19]

- Environment Minister of Finland Satu Hassi in a letter to his EU colleagues appeals to them to take action to **forbid the use of DU "as uranium dust** in the respiratory tract will expose both soldiers and civilians to strong radiation and permanently contaminate the areas where it is used".[20]

- In the Guidance provided to US Logistics Assistance Representative in Saudi Arabia, just before the Gulf War, the protective equipment was made requisite for contact with DU contamination, including **mask with filter elements** M13A2, in addition to protective coveralls, gloves, rubberized boots and head covers.[21]

10. **British National Radiological Protection Board**, on 5 July 1999, issued an advisory to British citizens travelling to the Province of Kosovo and Metohija:" The risk depends on the chemical form of the contamination. If the contamination is soluble, then DU can be absorbed into the body following inhalation or ingestion. In this case, the kidney is organ most likely to be affected by the heavy metal chemical toxic effect of DU. If the areas are contaminated by insoluble uranium oxide, then any hazard would arise from disturbing the contamination and **inhaling the dust**. The insoluble dust could be deposited in the lungs and over a very long period could be contributory **cause of lung cancer**".[22]

However, with British troops today present in the Province, the British Government is **concealing the information**. So, when learning that at the end of May 2000, UN personnel in Pristina was given information warning that "Toxicity is caused when DU is inhaled or ingested, the particles may enter the water system and be transported by the wind all over Kosovo, and that it is impossible to state accurately every location where DU was used", Mrs. Alice Mahon, on 5 June 2000, in the British Parliament, pursued the issue of "What warnings have been given to the civilian population and to the British troops serving there". Mr. Spelar answered "I have had no indication of any of that. The argument about DU seems to have been greatly exaggerated".[23]

Also, British officials stationed in the Province are hushing up the facts and knowingly expose their soldiers to risks by saying that "DU poses no risk since small quantities are involved - less than in Japanese watches". That is a dangerous manipulation with the health of those who are staying in the Province, and the public as well.

11. The use of DU weapons represents a grave **breach of the basic principles of international humanitarian law** because they cause unnecessary suffering and excessive injury, beyond the point used for military purposes. The use of this type of ammunition is absolutely inhuman, both in terms of immediate effects and the contamination that cannot be limited in time and territory, which represents a crime against

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19 Written statement submitted by Centre Europe Tiers-Monde, ECOSOC, UN Commission on Human Rights, 56th session, E/CN.4/2000/NGO/136, 9 March 2000

20 Annex 4

21 OSAGWI, p.74, US Department of Defense, 31 July 1998

22 NGWRC, Military Toxics Project, D. Fahey,"A Fear of Falling", page 18, 4 August 1999, Annex 5

23 Parliamentary Debates, Oral Answers, 5 June 2000, "Sunday Herald" 4 June 2000, Annex 6

humanity. For its inherent cruelty and immeasurable lethal effects threatening the current and future generations, in the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, DU weapons rank among the **weapons of mass or indiscriminate destruction**.[24] These are precisely the weapons and uses prohibited by international law for more than a century including the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1997.[25]

Because of the known mutagenic effect of DU, it is mathematically estimated (taking an average for some Gulf War veterans) that in the regions affected by DU ammunitions **3,000-21,000 additional fatal cancers could be expected** per 100,000 people.[26] At the Conference on DU and cancers, held in London on 30 July 1999, the scientists confirmed that DU shells can cause serious illness, including cancer. Roger Coghill, an experimental biologist who runs a research centre in Gwent, Wales, said on that occasion that "smoke and dust from the impact of the DU rounds could carry radioactive particles hundreds of yards into the air and several hundred miles downwind", and accused the Ministry of Defense of brushing the "biological truth" under the carpet (claiming that the level of radiation from DU weapons was relatively harmless, did not travel any significant distance and lasted only a short time). Mr. R.Coghil emphasized that the radioactivity from one particle of DU material released into the atmosphere was equivalent to 800 X-rays, and expressed an opinion that there will be **10,000 extra deaths** in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija and "called for radiation tests to be carried out in Serbia to test potential danger to the civilian population and peace-keeping forces".[27]

The Governments which have used DU weapons, without adequately discussing the potential health effects of inhaling DU particles, tried to conceal the effects of DU comparing it to **natural uranium**. In doing so, they deliberately overlook the fact that the used DU raises the activity of uranium in the soil in place of impact up to one million times.[28] So, the US Department of Defense, has minimized the harm which DU weapons can cause, discussing only the external effects of the radiation, not its effect within the body, and suggesting that we all take in natural uranium in food and water every day. However, we ingest natural uranium in such small quantities that the body is able to excrete again quickly without much harm done. Natural uranium is present approximately one part per million parts of soil and is never present in the 100% concentrations present in DU. DU in concentrated form is much more radioactive even from natural uranium ores (damage to the health and lives of the miners working in mining of natural uranium ores, is well known). Thus, the public statements of the US Department of Defense are a **deliberate attempt to confuse the public, the media, the servicemen and the world a large about the real danger of ingesting, or especially inhaled DU particulate**.[29]

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24 UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Resolutions 1996/16 and 1997/36

25 CADU ,August 1999, "The Use of DU and its effects on Human Rights in Iraq"

26 Catherine Euler, Ph.D. CADU, Oral Statement, UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 51st session, August 1999, Annex 3

27 Richard Norton-Taylor, Uranium shells warning for Kosovo alternative maybe : Ministry of Defense accused of hiding truth, The Observer, 31 July 1999, Annex 7

28 According to the information of UNSCEAR, UN organ following the effects of radiation, natural count of uranium in the soil is 5 do 125 Bq/kg of soil while one missile of 300 g on impact has an activity of around 10 MBq/kg, multiplying the uranium activity around one million times.

29 Catherine Euler, Ph.D. International Peace Bureau / Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, Written Report- DU Weapons, UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 51st session, August 1999.

12. US Army reports express more concern about public outcry protest and future restriction on the use of DU weapons then with contaminating foreign lands and poisoning civilians.[30] The Pentagon was aware that concerns over the health effects and environmental impact of DU, could make the weapon "politically unacceptable" and force military to stop using DU weapon. One report completed by the Army's AMCCOM (radiological) task group noted that long term effects of low doses of DU have been implicated in **cancer**, and therefore went on to recommend that the Army engage in "public relations efforts" to prevent a possible "adverse international reaction".[31]

The Pentagon and US defense industry officials, as well as the media, collaborate in cover up of DU. "The relationship between corporations, the Pentagon and the news media comprises a powerful trinity, with the Pentagon's military policies advancing the corporations financial interests and the media's corporate owners defining editorial policy".[32]

Dr Asaf Durakovic, the former head of nuclear medicine for the US Veterans Administration hospital in Wilmington, Delaware, who threatened Gulf War veterans for kidney problems and other disorder that are consistent with uranium poising, calls the Pentagon's dismissal of the effects of DU a "political decision",[33] and accuses the US Veterans Administration of engaging in a **"conspiracy of silence"** to avoid being held liable for veterans who develop cancer in the future.[34]

The US National Gulf War Resources Center- NGWRC has enganged in studying so-called **"Gulf War Syndrome"**, the symptoms of which include damage to organs, genetic manifestations, chronic fatigue, loss of endurance, frequent infections, sore throat, coughing, skin rashes, night sweats, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, headaches, memory loss, confusion, vision problems, muscle spasms and cramps, joint pain and loss of mobility, aching muscles, swollen glands, dental problems and malformations of newborns.

According to the NGWRC estimations, 50-80.000 US Gulf War veterans are concerned and 39.000 have been dismissed from active service. Some 2,400 to 5.000 have died up to now. In March 1994, reports on the health condition of some 251 families of veterans of the Gulf War living in the US state of Mississippi were published in the USA. **67% of the children** of these families were born with congenital deformities: **their eyes, ears or fingers are missing** or they are suffering from severe blood diseases and respiratory problems.[35]

I V

13. US air force used DU missiles in different parts of the world. The US Government continues even after the bombing of Yugoslavia the practice "Don't look, Don't find", **withholds information and tried to impede investigations of DU hazards to avoid moral and financial responsibilities** - exorbitant costs of health care for veterans and civilians exposed to DU dust and debris as well as cleaning up of terrain and disposing of DU contamination. "Cleaning up of the radioactive mess would cost billions, even if it were feasible".[36]

Under US pressure some international organizations tend to minimize the effects of DU and conceal

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30 Dan Fahey, "DU Weapons:Lessons from the 1991 Gulf War"

31 Bill Mesler "Pentagon Poison: The Great Radioactive Ammo Cover -Up", 26 May 1997

32 "Metal of Dishonor-Depleted Uranium", page 61, International Action Center,New York,1997

33 Ben Geman, Boston Fenix, April 8-15, 1999, DU:Side Effects of a New Weapons Tehnology, Bonner Bundnis gegen den NATO-Krieg, PDS, Bonn, FR Germany

34 Bill Mesler "Pentagon Poison: The Great Radioactive Ammo Cover -Up", 26 May 1997

35 "Metal of Dishonor-Depleted Uranium", page169, International Action Center,New York,1997

36 Leonard Dietz, "Contamination of Persian Gulf War Veterans and Others by DU", 20 June 1996

serious consequences caused by the use of DU, while some give up preparing a report warning of DU or withraw reports and published new versions deliberately diminishing the scope of effects of DU. According to Dan Fahey, a former US Navy officer "The Pentagon has refused to comply with 1993 congressional mandate to study the health effects of inhaled and ingested DU dust. In 1999 the Pentagon obstructed a United Nations investigation of the use of DU in Kosovo. The Pentagon is likely to continue impeding investigations of DU hazards".[37]

Nine US congressmen (supporting the rights of US veterans, victims of DU used by the US in the Gulf War) sent, on 8 June 2000, a letter to the President of the USA expressing concerns over the reports that the US Governments has **blocked an investigation by the World Health Organization's experts** into the effects of DU on human health.[38]

French veterans from the Gulf War of 1991, experiencing health problems caused by contacts with DU weapons, established an Association of the victims of the Gulf war "Avigolf". On that occasion, French Defense Minister Alain Richart, also denied the dangers of DU while Professor Pierre Rousset from the Nuclear Institute for Physics in Orsey, confirms the real danger from inhaling DU which may cause lung or kidney cancer[39]. On return from the Gulf War in 1991, French serviceman Gerard Jourdrein suffering from "Gulf War Syndrome", on 15 August 2000 died of advanced cancer. Family of Mr. Jourdrein demand the army to assume responsibility and his wife states that **"the soldiers coming from Yugoslavia were also sick"**, and that she has been exposed to "strong pressures by the Army".[40]

14. In the report of Amnesty International on war rights violations by NATO during the operations in Yugoslavia, referring to the studies indicating "the DU dust poses a significant health risk, if inhaled or ingested," the Amnesty International expresses concern about indiscriminate nature of DU ammunitions and recommended NATO and its member states "to investigate and cooperate fully with independent investigations of the possible long-term health and environment risk posed by DU weapons".[41]

DU particles are invisible, tasteless and odorless and for the establishment of DU radiation, a special equipment and experts are necessary. It is therefore necessary for the Yugoslav experts from the Institute for Nuclear Science "Vinca", in cooperation with independent experts and those from international organizations who are not under the influence of the US (Iraq, India, Russia, China), to examine the terrain and mark contaminated sites. In view of the fact that weather and natural laws contribute to dissemination of uranium in the field, it is necessary that international organizations for the protection of human rights, health, environment, food, etc. undertake urgent action in order to protect the population and ensure financial resources to decontaminate the terrain, wherever possible.

Catherine Euler, Ph.D. who has been studying the effects of DU for years, concluded that "Depleted Uranium Munitions **represent risking long-terms damage to the human genome and thus to humanity** and that is why it is an issue which the General Assembly UN, the Conference on Disarmament, the UNHCR, the ILO, WHO, UNEP, the Red Cross, and the Commission on Human Rights need to face very courageously, for the sake of all human beings who will ever exist after us".[42]

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37 Dan Fahey, "The Use of DU in Ammunition", page 3, 15 December 1999, Military Toxics Project, Washington

38 Congressman Tony P.Hall, "Hall Joins Veterans Advocates in Pressing for Study of Depleted Uranium in Iraq", Annex 8

39 L'Expresse No.2555, 22-28 June 2000.

40 L'Humanite, 17 August 2000

41 Amnesty International, NATO - FR Yugoslavia "Collateral Damage" or Unlawful Killings?, pages 17 and 24 June 2000

42 Catherine Euler, Ph.D. Campaign Against Depleted Uranium -CADU. Manchester, UK. Written Report-DU Weapons, UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 51st session, August 1999

Annex 1*

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE
OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES A GENEVE
COMMISSION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
ECONOMIC and SOCIAL COUNCIL
E/CN. 4/1992/18 Corr. 1 du 21 Janvier 1992
E/CN. 4/1992/18 Corr. du 30 Décembre 1991
CONVENTIONS INTERNATIONALES DE GENEVE 1949-1977
(CF. KISS Répertoire Français du Droit International Public T.IV N° 590)
ASSOCIATION POUR LA SAUVEGARDE DES FAMILLES ET ENFANTS DE DISPARUS
Loi 1901 Association déclarée au J.O. du 9 Mai 1967
SECRETARIAT GENERAL INTERNATIONAL : 30/32 rue de Vincennes 33000 BORDEAUX ☎ : 56.96.78.43
Henri TROUPEL Président International A.S.F.E.D. O.I.N.G.
Délégué Elu au CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DES FRANCAIS DE L'ETRANGER
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français
Président : Michel FONTANIE 18 rue Prosper Mérimée 67100 STRASBOURG
☎ 03.88.79.40.36 Fax : 03.88.40.04.51

Communauté St Georges
4 rue Falkenhauer
67100 STRASBOURG

Strasbourg, le 27 mai 1999

Messieurs,

Nous vous prions de trouver ci-dessous l'information communiquée par le Capitaine Marc Louis LECLAIR

Déclaration faite par le Général JOFFRET, commandant l'aviation française de l'Alliance, sur France Info et France International : "L'aviation a reçu l'ordre de détruire la vie en Serbie".

Ceci n'est pas un fait de guerre, mais un crime contre l'humanité.

Prière d'informer votre ambassade et de déposer une plainte internationale auprès de la Cour Internationale de La Haye.

Nous vous prions d'agréer, Messieurs, nos salutations distinguées.

Michel FONTANIE
Président ASFED FRANCE

* The annexes are being issued in the languages of submission only.

Annex 2

ORGANISATION DU TRAITÉ DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

LE SECRETAIRE GENERAL
SECRETARY GENERAL

BOULEVARD LEOPOLD III
B-1110 BRUXELLES

The Rt. Hon.
Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, PC

SG(2000)0108

07 February 2000

Dear Kofi,

In further reply to your letter of 14 October 1999, I would like to provide you with the following information, compiled by NATO's Military Authorities and reviewed by the North Atlantic Council, on the use of depleted uranium (DU) during Operation Allied Force.

I can confirm that DU was used during the Kosovo conflict.

DU rounds were used whenever the A-10 engaged armour during Operation Allied Force. Therefore, it was used throughout Kosovo during approximately 100 missions. The GAU-8/A API round is designated PGU-13/B and uses a streamlined projectile housing a sub-calibre kinetic energy penetrator machined from DU, a non-critical by-product of the uranium refining process. The A-10s used DU rounds as part of their standard load. A total of approximately 31,000 rounds of DU ammunition was used in operation Allied Force.

The major focus of these operations was in an area west of the Pec-Dakovica-Prizren highway, in the area surrounding Klina, in the area around Prizren and in an area to the north of a line joining Suva Reka and Urosevac. However, many missions using DU also took place outside of these areas. At this moment it is impossible to state accurately every location where DU ammunition was used. Attached is a map providing the best available information as to the location of DU ammunition use.

I hope that this information will help the UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) Balkans Task Force in its further work. I am looking forward to continued excellent cooperation between our two organisations.

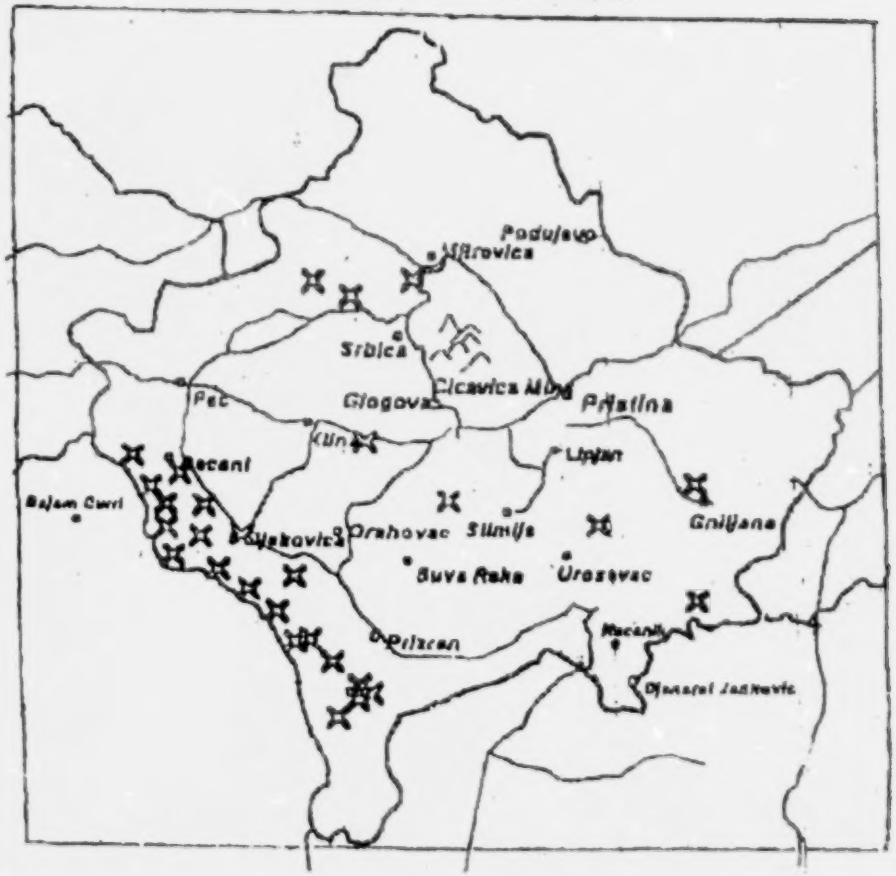
Sincerely,

George

His Excellency
Mr Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General
United Nations Headquarters
United Nations Plaza 2
New York 10017
USA

Use of Depleted Uranium Ammunition

- Areas of concentration marked on the attached map indicate a position where one or more aircraft attacked
- Markings are not precise, the overall area covered by the X on the map should give the required positional deviation
- Source of data for areas depleted was from pilot debriefs after engaging in FLEX targeting process during Operation Allied Force



X Areas where GAU-8 30MM Cannon Used

A/55/398
S/2000/883

Annex 3

Depleted Uranium Munitions: The Use of Radiological Weapons as a Violation of Human Rights

Joint Intervention by
the International Peace Bureau and International Educational Development

Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Fifty-first Session

Agenda Item 12:
Review of further developments
in fields with which the Sub-Commission has been concerned
Sub-item (d) (i) Adverse consequences of the
transfer of arms and illicit trafficking in arms on the enjoyment of human rights
(Scheduled to be discussed Monday, 23 August 1999)

Prepared by:
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The Campaign Against Depleted Uranium would also like to thank the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Geneva, for their invaluable support in producing this statement.

August 1999

Oral Statement

Thank you Mr. Chairman. We are pleased to present further information to the Sub-Commission on the use of depleted uranium weapons and thank the Sub-Commission for its work so far. We assure you that many NGOs around the world await further action on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, these radioactive weapons have already been used in Kuwait, Iraq, Kosovo and Serbia even though they are illegal under existing humanitarian law. There are four main tests which determine whether or not the use of weapons is illegal: (1) whether or not they stay within the territorial range of the conflict; (2) whether or not they damage the environment; (3) whether or not the effects of the weapons end when the conflict ends (or the temporal range of the weapons); and (4) whether or not they are inhumane, that is, continue to cause physical harm beyond the point used for military purposes. As the Sub-Commission is aware, Depleted Uranium Munitions fail all four tests.

1. Territorial Range

The radioactive aerosol produced by these weapons can travel at least 40 km. During the Gulf War some radioactive particles migrated to Saudi Arabia, a non-combatant country. During the recent Balkans War, scientists in Greece detected radiation levels 25% above normal whenever the wind blew from the direction of Kosovo. Bulgarian scientists reported levels eight times higher than usual within Bulgaria itself, also a non-combatant country.

2. DU Damages the Environment

Weapons tests using approximately 40,000-50,000 kg. of depleted uranium were conducted in the US state of New Mexico between 1955-1970. Los Alamos National Laboratory scientific reports on the ecological effects indicate the movement of depleted uranium through soils, water courses and the root systems of plants. In addition, depleted uranium was detected in the bones, hides and internal organs of mammals. A former US army expert on depleted uranium advises against planting foods in contaminated soils, and to avoid drinking contaminated water. One epidemiologist, a member of the UNEP Global 500, has suggested that people in affected areas only drink distilled water. The characteristic black dust near depleted uranium impact sites must be washed off food products; people involved in clean-up operations must wear respiratory protection, must cover their skin and hair, and must wash their hands frequently. What this means, Mr. Chairman, is that the Kosovar refugees are being sent back to a possibly radioactive environment. However, returnees do not have a map of the areas where depleted uranium was used, although such a map was published by the US Department of Defence for southern Iraq. The production of a similar map for Kosovo and Serbia would greatly assist efforts to evaluate the environmental impact of the war.

3. Temporal Range

Depleted Uranium has a half-life of 4.5 billion years, or the age of the planet itself. This means that it will go releasing ionising radiation into the environment, essentially forever. After the Gulf War DU remained suspended in the air above Kuwait City for two years. Soil particles can be re-suspended whenever the ground is disturbed, for example by wind, ploughing or reconstruction.

The International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) states that inside the body it takes 500 days for one chemical form of uranium to be excreted. However, there is evidence that the ceramic form of uranium dioxide, made during weapons explosions or fires, could stay in the body as long as 20 years. Depleted uranium was detected nine years after the end of the war in the urine of US, UK and Gulf War veterans and in Iraqi civilians.

4. Depleted Uranium Munitions Are Inhumane

Inhalation results in deposit of radioactive particles in the lungs and circulation of these particles via the bloodstream to various organs. DU and its decay products are alpha, beta and gamma emitters and can break the DNA or RNA in nearby cells. Because of the known mutagenic effect of depleted uranium, it is mathematically estimated that if there were a population of 100,000 people, each excreting an average of 3 micrograms of DU per day (the average for some Gulf War veterans), then 3,000-21,000 additional fatal cancers could be expected.

However, fatal cancers are only one expected health effect. Internal DU exposure can cause a weakened immune system response. It can damage the digestive tract, cause renal and neurological damage, and cause genetic malformations. One Iraqi doctor has reported a 7-10 per cent increase in birth abnormalities in southern Iraq. Health problems may continue for as long as the victim lives and some effects may not become apparent until several years after exposure. One of the shorter-lived decay products of uranium, thorium, is known to concentrate in breast tissue and may therefore be present in lactating mothers. Women's breast and uterine tissue is especially vulnerable to ionising radiation and women experience 1.5 times more cancers than men, given equal exposures. Thus the use of depleted uranium weapons may also be seen as a particular violation of women's human rights. Radiation damage to human DNA creates the nightmare of damage to the human genome, which is the map or seed for all future human generations, for as long as humanity exists.

Appeal

Mr. Chairman, the use of these weapons represents a grave breach of humanitarian law. Perhaps 14-17 countries now have these weapons in their arsenals,[1] and this trafficking is expected to increase. It is urgent that the Sub-Commission continues to play a major role in bringing worldwide attention to these violations.

[1] The list of countries currently holding depleted uranium munitions includes the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Pakistan, Thailand and Taiwan.

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMI
FINLAND

Annex 4

Military use of depleted uranium and ensuing environmental hazards

Dear Colleague,

I am approaching you on a subject where I think the EU should make an initiative: military use of depleted uranium (DU) should be forbidden.

I attach to this letter some material illustrating my point, which I received last November from Malcolm Hooper, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Medicinal Chemistry (University of Sunder-land, UK). Mr. Hooper is Chief Scientific Adviser to the Gulf Veterans' Association in the UK.

Depleted uranium is a waste from the nuclear industry. In the industry itself, the handling of depleted uranium is strictly regulated and controlled, and waste is kept in guarded areas. But in military use, in combat situations and test shooting, the very same waste is spread into the environment, where the spread follows a haphazard pattern.

The reason for military use of depleted uranium is the high density and flammability of the substance. These increase penetration. When hitting a target the shell will explode and generate a dust of very fine particles, which may be transported dozens of kilometers. Exposure to such dust will result in some particles remaining in the organism for many years, exuding radioactive radiation. Uranium is a heavy metal and, as such, toxic. Uranium dust on the ground will contaminate the area forever because of the permanence of uranium (half-life 4.5 milliard years).

In the Persian Gulf War, approximately 380-800 tonnes of depleted uranium was spread in the war arena. Now, eight years later, there is evidence of exposure of both allied and Iraqi troops and civilians. It is difficult to assess the extent of exposure, but in some cases it may be proven serious. In some war veterans, low levels of uranium/DU has been found in their urine and sperm even 7 years after the war.

The troops had not been trained to protect themselves against exposure to depleted uranium. Nearly all troops and other personnel were ignorant of these weapons and the threats they cause, which increased exposure.

Apparently, depleted uranium has also been used in Kosovo. However, the UNEP expert group headed by Pekka Haavisto, which studies the environmental consequences of the war, has not been informed of where and how much NATO used depleted uranium. Nevertheless it is known that DU weapons are part of the equipment of the A-10 Warthog planes which were used in the aerial attacks, and that most Tomahawk cruise missiles, of which over 1500 were fired into Serbia (including Kosovo), contain approximately 3 kg of DU each.

Munitions containing DU are nowadays part of the armament of many countries.

I am of the opinion that the use of DU should be banned, as uranium dust in the respiratory tract will expose both soldiers and civilians to strong radioactive radiation, and because it will permanently contaminate the areas where it is used with toxic heavy metal.

I therefore appeal both to the EU Commission and to my fellow ministers of the environment to take action to forbid the use of depleted uranium.

With kind regards,

Satu Hassi
Minister of the Environment

POSTAL ADDRESS
P.O.Box 380, FIN-00131 Helsinki, Finland
TELEPHONE
TELEFAX
+358 9 1991 9544
E-MAIL

Annex 5

5. The person at the "AMC Surgeon General's Office" (possibly the Army Surgeon General's Office) who told the LAR to "stop stirring things up."

If some of these individuals acted negligently to withhold or ignore DU warnings, they should be held accountable. Important lessons may be learned from the incidents described above which could help prevent or minimize DU exposures to American fighting forces in the future.

British Government Issues DU Advisory

On July 5, 1999, the United Kingdom National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) issued an advisory to British citizens traveling to Kosovo. This advisory can be found at: http://www.nrpb.org.uk/D-uran.htm.

Depleted Uranium

"Depleted uranium (DU) is used in armour piercing ammunition because of its very high density. It has been used in two recent military campaigns, the Gulf War and Kosovo. The amount of radioactivity in DU is low, and is less than in naturally occurring uranium to which we are all exposed in, for example, drinking water. Concerns have been raised that DU contamination might present a health risk to both military personnel and civilian populations. There are two types of potential hazard posed by the use of DU: a chemical toxicity hazard and a radiation hazard. There are a number of ways in which either UK troops or civilians could be exposed to DU during or after these conflicts. The most likely risk would be if people enter areas that have been damaged and contaminated by DU ammunition. The risk depends on the chemical form of this contamination. If the contamination is soluble then DU could be absorbed in to the body following inhalation or ingestion. In this case the kidney is the organ most likely to be affected by the heavy metal chemical toxic effect of DU. If the areas are contaminated by insoluble uranium oxides, then any hazard would arise from disturbing the contamination and inhaling the dust. The insoluble dust could be deposited in the lungs and over a very long period could be a contributory cause of lung cancer. In both cases very large exposures would be required to cause a significant increase in the risk of either kidney damage or lung cancer.

"People visiting or working in Kosovo, for example press and relief agencies, should seek advice from appropriate authorities on the disposition of damaged vehicles or areas of DU contamination and avoid disturbing these areas. If access to potentially contaminated areas is deemed essential, then advice should be sought from the Ministry of Defence or the Foreign Office on any protective measures required.

"Information on DU can be obtained from the page on the Ministry of Defence web site concerning the illnesses of Gulf War veterans."

This advisory shows the British government is concerned that its citizens might be exposed to depleted uranium contamination in Kosovo. The important message in this advisory should be widely distributed within Kosovo: stay away from areas potentially contaminated with DU.

Annex 6

(Parliamentary debates)

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): Is the Minister aware that German soldiers in Kosovo have been told not to eat local produce after fears that deposits of uranium from NATO's use of depleted uranium might have contaminated the soil. Similarly, there have been reports that the United Nations has warned its officials that the water supply could be contaminated. What warnings have been given to the civilian population and to British troops serving there?

Mr. Spellar: I have had no indication of any of that. The problems of water supplies are more to do with traditional pollution, which is why our forces have substantial supplies of bottled water. The argument about depleted uranium seems to have been greatly exaggerated.

SUNDAY HERALD, Page 4 June 4. 2000

UN troops in Nato uranium food scare

By Fellicity Arbuthnot

GERMAN soldiers serving as United Nations peacekeepers in Kosovo have been told not to eat local produce after fears that deposits of radioactive uranium from Nato air strikes have contaminated the countryside.

The UN has warned its officials in Kosovo that the water supply may be contaminated.

Last year Dutch soldiers in Prizren were ordered to hand in all clothes and equipment, which were shipped back to the Netherlands in sealed bags.

Depleted uranium, used in military shells, has been linked to Gulf war syndrome and the spiralling levels of cancer and birth deformities in Iraq.

The use of depleted uranium in shells has twice been condemned as a weapon of mass destruction by the UN commission of human rights.

A UN environmental mission last year cited serious contamination, but the report was allegedly suppressed.

The orders to German soldiers come a week after a seven-page document warning of the dangers of depleted uranium was put into the mail boxes of all personnel working from the UN building in Pristina.

More than 31,000 missiles were fired into the former Yugoslavia, Nato estimated say.

Scientists estimate that the amount of uranium in the soil in the worst affected areas is up to 20 times the naturally occuring amount. Yugoslavia has said an urgent clean up is needed.

One sick Edinburgh-based Gulf war veteran, who served for 13 years with the 1st Battalion of the Royal Scots, said:

"The unit is ravaged by Gulf war illnesses. An entire platoon - 36 men - are unwell and four friends who worked from the same vehicle have cancer."

Linlithgow MP Tam Dalyell said he would pursue the issue in Parliament this week.

Annex 7

Breaking news | The Observer | Columnists

Uranium shells warning for Kosovo alternative maybe: MoD accused of hiding truth

Nato bombing may hit future generations, scientists tell conference

Interactive guides, useful links latest news and analysis on Kosovo

Richard Norton-Taylor
Saturday July 31, 1999

Depleted uranium shells can cause birth defects and serious illness, including cancer, scientists at a conference on depleted uranium and cancers in Iraq claimed yesterday, warning that radioactivity from DU ammunition could cause health problems in Kosovo.

"One single particle of depleted uranium lodged in the lymph node can devastate the entire immune system," Roger Coghill, an experimental biologist, told the conference.

"We know that some 1m DU bullets were fired [during the Gulf war] and many still lie in the Gulf desert, causing clearly serious cancers and birth defects. The connection between the two is biologically extremely plausible," he said.

Mr Coghill, a biologist who runs a research centre in Gwent, Wales, said smoke and dust from the impact of the rounds could carry radioactive particles hundreds of yards into the air and several hundred miles downwind.

The use of DU shells in Kosovo, fired mainly from US A-10 "tank-busting" aircraft, was endangering the health of returning refugees, peacekeepers, aid workers and the people of neighbouring countries, he said.

"We think there will be be 10,000 extra deaths in Kosovo," Mr Coghill said, basing the figure on extrapolations from US statements about the use of DU weapons during the war.

The ministry of defence said in statements that the level of radiation from DU weapons was relatively harmless as it was confined to the soil, did not travel any significant distance and lasted only a short time.

But Mr Coghill accused the MoD of brushing the "biological truth" under the carpet. The radioactivity from one particle of DU material released into the atmosphere was equivalent to 800 X-rays, he said.

Siegwart-Horst Gunther, a German epidemiologist and president of Yellow Cross International, set up to protect children's health, said his studies in Iraq since 1991 had led him to believe that contact with DU weapon debris was linked to sharp increases in infectious diseases and immune deficiencies, Aids-like syndromes, kidney disorders and congenital deformities.

He said that when he had brought back a used DU bullet case, the size of a cigar, from the southern Iraq battlefield area, he was arrested in Germany and the material was impounded and stored in a specially shielded depository.

But critics of the claimed link between the use of DU weapons and increase in cancer and genetic abnormalities say the problems could, instead, be connected with the use of chemical weapons used against the Kurds and others in Iraq during the 1980s.

Richard Guthrie of Sussex university's science policy research unit told the conference in London yesterday that the case was "not cut and dried" and there needed to be more research - something Dr Coghill conceded.

Mona Kammas, a member of Iraq's Committee of Pollution Impact by Aggressive Bombing, claimed an increase in birth defects in parts of Iraq had been caused by depleted uranium, as she displayed photographs of deformed babies.

"When we studied the nearest to the depleted uranium sources, the more abnormalities we got," she said.

Thousands of Iraqi military personnel and civilians were affected by the after-effects of the shells, Dr Kammas alleged.

Declassified US documents show that US forces fired about 944,000 rounds of DU ammunition in Iraq and Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf war. Britain says it fired less than 100 rounds.

Mr Coghill called for radiation tests to be carried out in Serbia to test potential danger to the civilian population and peacekeeping forces.

Annex 8

Congressman Tony P. Hall

U.S. House of Representatives
1432 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 9, 2000

Hall Joins Veterans' Advocates in Pressing for Study of Depleted Uranim in Iraq

Put U.S. veterans and innocent Iraqis' health ahead of politics, Congressmen urge

WASHINGTON— Rep. Tony P. Hall, D-Ohio, joined Congressional leaders known for their advocacy on behalf of American veterans in calling for an investigation of depleted uranium's effects on human health. In a letter to President Clinton on Thursday, Hall and eight other Members of the U.S. House of Representatives urged him to request a World Health Organization study of depleted uranium in Iraq.

"We are concerned by reports that the United States Government has blocked an investigation by the World Health Organization's experts into the effects of depleted uranium on Iraq's civilians," they wrote. "If these reports are true, we are sacrificing an opportunity to help our own veterans to political concerns; we also may be putting those who serve in the U.S. military now at risk needlessly."

The Congressmen urged President Clinton to involve himself personally. ". . . your leadership is needed to reverse this troubling record," they said. "We urge you to put the health of American veterans and innocent Iraqi civilians ahead of political efforts to isolate Iraq's government. . . . Whatever WHO finds will better inform our country's decisions about protecting American troops and others in the future. Its work should not be delayed."

The full text of the letter follows. Joining Hall in writing were Reps. Lane Evans, D-Illinois; Bob Filner, D-California; Sam Farr, D-California; Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio; Robert A. Underwood, D-Guam; John W. Olver, D-Massachusetts; Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii; and Silvestre Reyes, D-Texas.

The text of the letter follows.

June 8, 2000

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, American veterans of the Gulf War are fighting health problems which are not well understood by medical professionals, but which are real and affect their lives in significant ways. There are credible reports that Iraqi civilians too are suffering: cancer rates in Iraq appear to be significantly higher than the worldwide average, although the reason for this has not been determined.

The suspected culprit in both cases is depleted uranium, a toxic and radioactive metal. Yet, nine years after the Gulf War ended, few efforts have been made to examine its effects on human health.

We are concerned by reports that the United States Government has blocked an investigation by the World Health Organization's experts into the effects of depleted uranium on Iraq's civilians. If these reports are true, we are sacrificing an opportunity to help our own veterans to political concerns; we also may be putting those who serve in the U.S. military now at risk needlessly.

The General Accounting Office recently criticized the U.S. Government for mishandling its investigations on the possible effects of DU exposure on our Gulf War veterans. Critics of U.S. humanitarian policy toward Iraq also take issue with our response to this and other problems plaguing Iraqi civilians.

Mr. President, your leadership is needed to reverse this troubling record. We urge you to put the health of American veterans and innocent Iraqi civilians ahead of political efforts to isolate Iraq's government by immediately requesting the WHO to conduct a comprehensive investigation of this matter.

Whatever WHO finds will better inform our country's decisions about protecting American troops and others in the future. Its work should not be delayed.

[signed: Hall, Evans, Filner, Farr, Kucinich, Underwood, Olver, Abercrombie, Reyes]